**The Barbarians: Germanic Tribes**

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**The Franks**

The **Franks**, conquered much of the Roman province of **Gaul** (now France) in the late **fourth** century and early **fifth** century.

They were **farmers** but loved making **war**.

Most freemen went about **armed**, often with a special throwing **axe** called a **Fransisca.**

The men and women were fond of **jewelry** and wore their **hair** long.

They named themselves "**Frank**" – which meant free.

**The Merovingians**

The Merovingian royal family ruled the **Franks** for almost **three** hundred years.

Clovis I, reigned from **481** C.E. until **511** C.E. and founded the country called **France** making Paris it's capital.

After Clovis I, died his kingdom was divided amongst his **children**. They became famous for **treachery** and murderous infighting. It weakened the kingdom over the next few centuries and the kingdom fell in to **chaos**.

**The Laws of the Franks**

The Franks had their own **legal** code, which differed greatly from Roman law. These laws were called the **Salic** Code.

The Salic Code placed a **monetary** value on every piece of **property** and on every **person**. If property was stolen or a person injured or killed, a fine called a **wergild** had to be paid to the owner of the property or to the murder victim's family. In the case of a murder, the family could refuse to accept the fine, and instead could demand the guilty person's **death**. If a relation of the victim took revenge by killing the murderer, the law did not hold him or her responsible.

**Everyday Life Among the Franks**

The Franks had **social** classes: Some were very rich and some incredibly poor. Around **60** % were **serfs**, or **peasants**. Although they were free and not slaves, serfs **were not allowed** to move away from the manor. The lords and rulers could **steal** serfs' crops at any time. Merchants often tried to profit from the misfortunes of ordinary people by raising prices when food was scarce.

**Charlemagne**

Charlemagne came to power in western Europe in **786** C.E. The Pope decided to recognize Charlemagne's father, Pepin the Short, because he had defeated a **Muslim** army that had threatened to conquer Europe in **732** C.E.

Charlemagne was very interested in **rebuilding** civilization, and he had the intelligence and power to do so. He **expanded** the Merovingian Empire in every direction. On Christmas Day in **800** C.E. he was crowned the **Emperor** of the Romans by Pope Leo III.

The **Carolingian** Empire gave much of western Europe a brief **rest** from the wars that had torn it apart since the fall of Rome.

Charlemagne govered from the the modern day country of **Germany**. He allowed local governments much **freedom**, he also sent out agents, called **missi dominici**, to make sure that people were treated properly.

He created a **single** code of laws for the **whole** empire. He tried to make things better for the **serfs** and **tradespeople**.

He could also be **ruthless**. When the Saxon leaders refused to convert to Christianity he ordered his soldiers to kill about **4000** Saxons in a single day.

A special concern for Charlemagne was to improve **education** throughout his empire. He established new **schools** in monastaries and encouraged the learning of the **Latin** classics.

He built many churches and palaces in modern day **France** and Germany.

Charlemagne brought about a rebirth of learning and the arts which is called the Carolingian Renaissance.

After his death the peace and security he had worked for fell apart because of **feuds**  and his **decedents** weakness in the face of the Viking invasions.

**The Anglo-Saxons and the Celts**

Britian was invaded by the **Angles**, **Saxons**, and **Jutes** driving out the native Celtic peoples.

Soon large numbers of Germanic invaders began to settle in **Britian** and pushed the Celts into **Wales**, **Cornwall**, **Scotland** and across the sea to **Ireland**.

The **Celts** had once been a powerful people, inhabiting much of Europe, from Spain all the way to southern Russia.

Celtic language **disappeared** from Britian and the Anglo-Saxons language was English.

**Anglo-Saxon England**

The Anglo-Saxons were **farmers**. They lived in small villages, the men and women shared the hard work between them. Some **trade** and **business** took place.

The Anglo-Saxons had skilled **metal** workers. They made highly crafted **jewelry**.

The Anglo-Saxons were also great story **tellers**, who created wonderful **epics**, such as Beowulf.

**Alfred** the Great, an early ruler of Anglo-Saxon England lost may battles to the Vikings before he learned how to beat them. After Alfred's death he left western and southern England **united** and **prosperous**.

England would suffer from a deadly combination of weak kings and Viking invaders until the time of William the Conqueror.

**The Pivotal Role of the Irish**

The Celts, had practiced a form of nature worship called **Druidism** for many centuries. They fought **bloody battles**, kept slaves, and made **human sacrifices**.

These things changed in the fifth century, when St. Patrick came and brought the Irish a healthy respect for both **Christianity** and learning. Monastery's became the centers for **learning** and sprang up in the countryside and along the coasts. Many people came to these monasteries to **escape** Germanic invasions. Until the time of Charlemagne, **Ireland** was the greatest center of learning in Europe.

Irish monks trained missionaries and spread Christianity. The Irish monks also **preserved** the cultural legacy of the societies by acting as a **book** factory. Irish monks hand copied classics and Celtic stores that might have been **lost** forever.

**The Vikings**

The Vikings were **EVERYWHERE**! They roamed the **Mediterranean** Sea, sailed down the great rivers all the way from Russia to Constantinople.

The Vikings came from the north looking for **plunder** and glory. They travelled in swift longships. They would strike fast then disappear before local rulers could raise a force to oppose them. Raiding forces could be a few ships to hundreds. They would **burn** everything in sight and **kill** everyone they found.

**Viking Reputation**

The Vikings were mercilessly destructive. It was common practice to kill or enslave every man, woman, and child they found. Some monarchs and church leaders would pay the Vikings to leave their lands. The Vikings took payments called Danegeld from rulers. The payments would come from taxes the rulers would raise from the common people.

Everyday Life Among the Vikings

Most Vikings were farmers and fishers living in small villages by the sea. They came from Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, and Denmark). The probably began to raid because the land could not support the growing population. People lived at the end of fjords. Viking farms tended to be small.

Men, women and children shared the work, but weaving was always done by the women. Free Viking women had many rights under the law. They could own property, divorce their husband, and they could sue in court. Gunnhild, the "mother of kings," was a legendary leader. Freydis Eriksdottir the sister of Leif the Lucky, led an expedition to Newfoundland early in the eleventh century.

Viking landowners always had thralls or slaves. Thralls had no legal rights and could be killed by their masters at any time. The children of Thralls were automatically slaves.

The Vikings had a rich culture. They had highly skilled woodworkers and smiths. The keepers of history were called skalds. These poets had to have excellent memories and be good singers. This was an important skill as most people could not read or write.

Viking Law and Government

The Vikings had law speakers as their laws were not written. These people memorized the laws and recited them as needed. The Vikings usually fined criminals but dangerous offenders were treated more harshly. The most dreaded penalty was to be declared an outlaw, which meant that they were outside of the las and anyone could kill them and then be entitled to some of the outlaws property.

The End of the Viking Age

The Viking age ended in the eleventh century. As the Viking invasions lessened in western Europe, people began to lead more settled lives.